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The Urban District of Skelmersdale

# Annual Report

of the

## Medical Officer of Health

for the year

1954

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**SKELMERSDALE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL  
1954**

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Chairman ..... A. DAVIES  
Vice-Chairman ... W. J. BROWN

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Chairman of the Health Committee ..... W. J. FENNEY

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F. ACKRAY	A. H. MORGAN
W. J. BROWN	W. MIDDLEHURST
T. A. FARRIMOND	J. W. SHUFFLEBOTHAM
H. HARDMAN	J. T. WAREING
J. T. LATHOM	C. WELDING
T. MOSTON	J. S. WILLIAMS

Medical Officer of Health :

J. GORDON HAILWOOD, M.D., Ch.B., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.P.H.  
(Part-time)

(Divisional Medical Officer, Lancashire County Council)

Sanitary Inspector : NOEL BENSON, D.P.A. (Liverpool).

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE  
HEALTH COMMITTEE

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GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report on the health of the District during 1954.

The general health has remained good, and the cases of infectious diseases have been about non-existent—only five cases being notified throughout the year.

The Birth Rate for the year was 14.8 per 1,000 population, an improvement on the figure of 14.0 for last year.

The Death Rate, however, showed an increase at 12.5 per 1,000 population, compared with 10.8 in 1953. There were no maternal deaths.

The death occurred of two infants under twelve months, giving an infantile death rate of 21 per 1,000 live births. Although this is an increase on the figure for the last two years, it shows a satisfactory state of child care in Skelmersdale.

Housing conditions are slowly improving, and a start has been made on demolishing some of the worst property in the district. It is hoped that the slum clearance programme will gain impetus now that the number of Council houses being built is increasing. There is no doubt in my mind that the excellent health record of Skelmersdale during the year has been brought about by the improved housing conditions which many of the inhabitants are now enjoying.

Finally, I would thank the Members of the Health Committee for their interest, and the Staff for their ready help and co-operation at all times.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

J. G. HAILWOOD.

August, 1955.

Area of the District—1,942 acres.

Resident population (Registrar General's estimate at mid-1954): 6,370.  
Number of inhabited houses according to Rate Books at end of 1954—  
1,992.

Rateable Value—£24,774.

Sum represented by a penny rate—£94.

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### SUMMARY OF VITAL STATISTICS FOR 1954

#### Live Births

					Male	Female	Total
Legitimate	...	...	...	....	49	43	92
Illegitimate	...	...	...	...	1	1	2

Crude birth rate per 1,000 estimated  
population — 14.8.

Adjusted birth rate per 1,000 esti-  
mated population — 14.8.

#### Still Births

Legitimate	...	...	...	...	1	2	3
Illegitimate	...	...	...	...	—	—	—

Rate per 1,000 total (live and still)  
births — 31.

Deaths	...	...	...	...	...	35	33	68
--------	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	----	----	----

Crude death rate per 1,000 esti-  
mated population — 10.7.

Adjusted death rate per 1,000 esti-  
mated population — 12.5.

#### Deaths from Puerperal Causes:

Puerperal and Post-abortive Sepsis	...	...	...	...	—
Other maternal causes	...	...	...	...	—

### **Deaths of Infants under one year of age :**

All infants per 1,000 live births	...	...	...	...	2
Legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate live births...	...				2
Illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births	...				—
Deaths from Cancer (all ages) ...	...	...	...	...	13
"  " Measles (all ages) ...	...	...	...	...	—
"  " Whooping Cough (all ages) ...	...	...	...	...	—
"  " Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age) ...	...	...	...	...	—

### **BIRTHS**

There were 94 births registered in the Urban District during the year, of which 50 were male and 44 female; and including 2 illegitimate births, of which one was male and one female. The adjusted birth rate per 1,000 population (mid-1954) (comparability factor 1.00) was 14.8 compared with 14.0 in 1953.

### **DEATHS**

The total number of deaths registered in the Urban District during the year number 68, of this number 35 were male and 33 female. This was an increase of 6 on the figure for 1953. The crude death rate for the year was 10.7 per 1,000 population. The adjusted death rate (comparability factor 1.17) was 12.5 per 1,000 population compared with 10.8 in 1953.

### **INFANT MORTALITY**

There were no deaths during the year due to Zymotic and Epidemic diseases.

There were two deaths of infants under one year, an infantile mortality rate of 21 per 1,000 live births.

### **MATERNAL MORTALITY**

The Maternal Mortality Rate per 1,000 births (live and still) was nil. The figure for England and Wales was 0.69. No maternal deaths occurred in the District during the year.

**CAUSES OF DEATH IN THE SKELMERSDALE  
URBAN DISTRICT, 1954**

**Causes of Death**

			Male	Female
Tuberculosis of the respiratory system	...	...	—	—
Other forms of Tuberculosis	...	...	—	—
Syphilitic Disease	...	...	—	—
Diphtheria	...	...	—	—
Whooping Cough	...	...	—	—
Meningococcal infection	...	...	—	—
Acute Poliomyelitis	...	...	—	1
Measles	...	...	—	—
Other infective and parasitic diseases	...	...	—	—
Cancer	...	...	7	6
Diabetes	...	...	—	—
Vascular lesions of nervous system	...	...	6	5
Heart diseases	...	...	15	13
Other circulatory disease	...	...	1	—
Influenza	...	...	—	—
Pneumonia	...	...	1	1
Bronchitis	...	...	1	1
Other diseases of respiratory system	...	...	—	—
Ulcer of stomach and duodenum	...	...	—	—
Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhoea	...	...	1	—
Nephritis and nephrosis	...	...	1	—
Hyperplasia of prostate	...	...	—	—
Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion	...	...	—	—
Congenital malformations	...	...	—	1
Other defined and ill-defined diseases	...	...	2	5
Motor vehicle accidents	...	...	—	—
All other accidents	...	...	—	—
Suicide	...	...	—	—
Homicide and operations of war	...	...	—	—
<b>TOTALS</b>	...	...	35	33

**Deaths of Infants under 1 Year :**

	M	F
Legitimate	—	2
Illegitimate	—	2

**Still Births :**

Legitimate	1	2
Illegitimate	—	1

## **GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICE FOR THE AREA**

### **Laboratory Facilities**

Pathological specimens of a simple nature, throat swabs, etc., are sent for examination at the E.M.S. Pathological Laboratory at the Ormskirk County Hospital. All other specimens are sent to the City Laboratories, Liverpool.

### **Ambulance Facilities**

Ambulance Services are provided by the County Council under the National Health Service Act, 1946.

### **Clinics and Treatment Centres**

A Congregational Schoolroom in Witham Road is utilised every Wednesday morning as a Child Welfare Centre and Minor Ailments Clinic, under the direction of Dr. Robertson Wilson and Nurse Bodley, of the Lancashire County Council.

An Immunisation Clinic is held on the fourth Wednesday afternoon in each month at 2-15 on the same premises by Dr. Robertson Wilson.

### **Hospitals**

There are no hospitals in the town.

The Ormskirk County Hospital and the Wigan Hospitals provide ample accommodation for all patients from Skelmersdale.

Infectious cases are admitted to the New Hall Isolation Hospital, Scarisbrick.

## **SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA**

The township is supplied with water by the Southport and District Water Board.

Water is pumped from two bore holes some 750 feet deep at Scarth Hill into the adjoining water tower, from which it gravitates through a 7in. main to the district. This pumping station formerly belonged to the Council, who sold it to the Southport and District Water Board in 1907. The district mains are still owned by the Council. It is very likely that many of these older mains will be badly corroded owing to the constantly acid nature of the water, and the large amount of free carbon dioxide it carries. The water supplied is, however, of the highest standards of organic and bacterial purity.

### Sewage Disposal

The district is sewered on the partly separate system. The sewage from approximately 1,595 houses in the principal housing area is discharged by gravity through a 24 inch outfall sewer at the Council's Berry Street Disposal Works, and that from 225 houses by a 15 inch outfall sewer at the Penny Lane Works.

Sewage from a small number of houses in the Stormy Area is discharged into settling tanks at the rear of Summer Street.

The sewage at both works is treated by settlement and land irrigation, and periodical cleansing and repairs are carried out.

Work was commenced on the new percolating filter bed at Penny Street, which will treat the increased flow from the new High Street housing site.

### Closet Accommodation

Privy middens—74. Number of closets attached to these middens—104.

Number of pail closets—32.

Number of dry ash pits (excluding middens)—Nil.

Number of moveable ash bins—1,892.

Number of houses on water carriage system—1,830.

Number of water closets (including schools, etc.)—1,936.

### HOUSING

#### **Number of New Houses Erected during the Year :**

(a)	Total (including numbers given under (b) :—	
	(i) By the Local Authority ... ... ...	24
	(ii) By other Local Authorities ... ... ...	—
	(iii) By other bodies and persons ... ... ...	6
(b)	With State assistance under the Housing Acts :—	
	(i) By the Local Authority ... ... ...	—
	(ii) By other bodies or persons ... ... ...	—

#### **1. Inspection of Dwelling Houses During the Year :—**

(1) (a)	Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts) ... ... ... ... ...	1139
	(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose ...	2414
(2) (a)	Number of dwelling houses which were inspected and recorded under Housing Consolidated Regulations 1925 and 1932 ... ... ... ...	—
	(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose ...	—
(3)	Number of dwelling houses found to be unfit for human habitation ... ... ... ...	—
(4)	Number of dwelling houses found not reasonably fit for human habitation ... ... ... ...	333
	Number of nuisances discovered ... ... ...	654
	Number of nuisances abated ... ... ...	589

**2. Remedy of Defects during the year without Service of Formal Notice :**

Number of defective dwelling houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	298
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**3. Action under Statutory Powers during the Year : ... 1**

**4. Proceedings under Sections 11 and 13 of the Housing Act 1936 : ...**

(1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made ...	...	...	...	...	...	1
(2) Number of dwelling houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders ...	...	...	...	...	...	4

**INFECTIOUS DISEASE STATISTICS**

	Smallpox	Enteric Fever	Scarlet Fever	Measles	Diphtheria	Puerperal Pyrexia	Erysipelas	Whooping Cough	Pneumonia	Para-typhoid Fever.	Ophthalmia Neonatorum.	Acute Poliomyelitis
Cases	...	—	—	1	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Deaths	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	1

## NOTIFIABLE DISEASES DURING THE YEAR 1954

Notifiable Diseases	TOTAL CASES NOTIFIED										Hospital			
	YEARS										Total Deaths	Total Cases removed to Hospital	Deaths in Hospital of persons belonging to district	
	Total Cases at all Ages	Under 1 year	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20-35				
Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	...	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
Diphtheria	...	...	...	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Enteric Fever	...	...	...	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Para-Typhoid Fever	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Measles	...	...	...	...	...	2	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—
Whooping Cough	...	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Acute Pneumonia	...	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	Unknown 2
Meningococcal Infection	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Puerperal Pyrexia	...	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ophthalmia Neonatorum...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Pulmonary Tuberculosis ...	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	—
Non-Pulmonary Tuberculosis	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Acute Poliomyelitis	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
Erysipelas	...	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTALS	...	...	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	—	3	1 3

The following table shows the Number, Monthly Distribution and Nature of Cases of Infectious Diseases coming under the notice of the Medical Officer of Health during 1954 :—

	Removal to Hospital											
	Totals											
	December											
	November											
	October											
	September											
	August											
	July											
	June											
	May											
	April											
	March											
	February											
	January											
Anthrax	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Smallpox	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
Diphtheria	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Enteric Fever	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Para-Typhoid Fever	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Acute Primary and Acute Influenza	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Influenza	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Puerperal Pyrexia	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Meningococcal Infection	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Malaria	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Dysentery	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Measles	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Whooping Cough	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Erysipelas	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Acute Poliomyelitis	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
TOTALS	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	...	...

## DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION

Total number of children who have completed a full course of Immunisation up to and including 31st December, 1954:

	Age Groups		Total under 15 years
	0—4 years	5—14 years	
Total Population in Age Groups	514	935	1449
Total Number Immunised ... ...	351	841	1192
Percentage ... ... ... ...	68.4%	89.8%	82.2%

**Table showing Incidence and Mortality from Diphtheria 1944-1954**

# SCARLET FEVER

**Table showing Incidence and Mortality from Scarlet Fever 1944-1954**

**TUBERCULOSIS****New Cases and Mortality during 1954**

Age Periods	NEW CASES				DEATHS			
	Respiratory		Non-Respiratory		Respiratory		Non-Respiratory	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
Years								
0—1	...	...	—	—	—	—	—	—
1—5	...	...	—	—	—	—	—	—
5—10	...	...	—	—	—	—	—	—
10—15	...	...	—	—	—	—	—	—
15—20	...	...	—	—	—	—	—	—
20—25	...	...	—	—	—	—	—	—
25—35	...	...	1	—	—	—	—	—
35—45	...	...	1	—	—	—	—	—
45—55	...	...	—	—	—	—	—	—
55—65	...	...	—	—	—	—	—	—
65 and upwards	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
			2	—	—	—	—	—
TOTALS	...							
			2	—	—	—	—	—

**Notifications on Form 1 by Medical Officers of Hospitals**

	Public Assistance and General and Military Hospitals	Sanatoria and Pulmonary Hospitals
Pulmonary—		
Males   ...	...	—
Females ...	...	—
Non-Pulmonary—		
Males   ...	...	—
Females ...	...	—

Dispensary and sanatorium treatment for Tuberculosis is administered by the appropriate department of the Lancashire County Council.

**THE FOLLOWING REPORT HAS BEEN MADE BY THE  
SANITARY INSPECTOR, MR. BENSON**

The cold weather in the early part of the year brought the usual crop of "burst" pipes. Few occupiers appear to realise that it is their responsibility to protect w.c. fittings and pipes against frost.

A test survey of 100 houses having outside w.c.'s which were all frozen up, showed later that only six had resulted in burst supply pipes.

Work was commenced on modernisation and improvement to the sanitary accommodation at six public houses in the district.

Close attention has been directed to the production and sale of "clean food." Premises and canteens have been inspected. The exact quantity of food wasted each year is not known, but much could be saved by better storage. In this district Unsound Food Certificates for food representing an approximate value of £90 were issued. Refrigerators in all food premises would effect a considerable saving and ensure foods reaching the consumer in much better condition.

Although the provision of grants for improvements to houses has been in operation since the Housing Act of 1949, only one application was made during the year under review.

Trough closets were abolished at the one remaining school having this insanitary form of convenience. Sanitary accommodation at all four schools is now fairly satisfactory. There is still room for improvements in the arrangements and facilities for serving school dinners at two schools.

The refuse services have operated during the year with uniform regularity, bins being emptied weekly. Owing to the increasing number of houses being erected, one extra man was engaged during the latter part of the year. This will enable a more frequent clearing of the privy middens, which is particularly important during the warmer months of the fly breeding season.

Only two conversions from privy middens to water closets were made during the year. This particular conversion necessitated the laying of 90 yards 6in. pipe by the Council to the nearest main sewer.

## INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD SUPPLIES

### Milk.

There are six dairy farms producing milk in this district. These are registered by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, who are responsible for the inspection of premises and cattle. Other dairies are registered by the Local Authority.

Most of the milk sold in the district is now heat treated (i.e., "Pasteurised" or "Sterilised") and may be regarded as safe.

One sample was taken of untreated milk and tested for the presence of tubercle bacilli. This was found to be negative.

Of nine samples taken and submitted to the Turbidity Methylene Blue or Phosphatase Test all were satisfactory.

#### Milk Samples Submitted for Examination

Milk	Test	RESULT		
		Samples	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Raw	T.B.	1	1	—
	Methylene Blue	9	9	—
Pasteurised	Phosphatase	7	7	—
	Methylene Blue	9	9	—
Sterilised	Turbidity	1	1	—

The following licences were issued for the sale of "Designated Milks":—

Milk					No.
Tuberculin Tested	...	...	...	...	4
Pasteurised	...	...	...	...	4
Sterilised	...	...	...	...	18

### Ice Cream

There are fifteen premises registered for the sale of ice-cream, but none is manufactured in the district.

All samples taken and submitted for examination were satisfactory.

### Bakehouses

Periodic visits are made to the seven bakehouses in the district. Most of the premises are of the older type where only a few persons are employed.

Limewashing and cleansing of walls and ceilings in all bakehouses was carried out without recourse for written notice.

## Unsound Food

The undermentioned articles of food were on inspection found unfit for human consumption, voluntarily surrendered and destroyed.

Food	Weight
Ham ...	216 lbs.
Tongue ...	50 lbs.
Veal ...	1 lb.
Corned Beef ...	8 lbs.
Pork ...	7 lbs.
Bacon ...	32 lbs.
Sausage ...	18 lbs.
Cheese ...	39 lbs.
Peas ...	1 lb.
Tomatoes ...	1 lb.
Evaporated Milk ...	2 lbs.
Beans ...	1 lb.
Salmon ...	1 lb.
Plums ...	19 lbs.
Pineapple ...	1 lb.
Grapes ...	6 lbs.
Pears ...	7 lbs.

## Adulteration of Food

The following samples of food were taken by the Lancashire County Council, who are responsible in this district for Sections of the Food and Drugs Act 1938/1950, dealing with food adulteration.

Food	No. of Samples
Apples ...	2
Oranges ...	2
Butter ...	1
Margarine ...	2
Dripping ...	1
Golden raising powder ...	1
Xmas puddings ...	2
Jam ...	1
Treacle ...	2
Sweets ...	4

All the above samples were reported by the County Analyst to be genuine with the exception of the following :—

Sample	Result of Analysis	Action taken.
1 formal Channel Islands Milk.	Fat content only 3.75%	Ministry of Food informed.
1 Oranges	Juice from oranges contained 18 parts per million Thiourea	Importers cautioned and Port Health Authority and Ministry of Food informed.

## Rodent Control

Routine investigations for the destruction of rats and mice were carried out and treatment done by the part-time Rodent Operator. The free service of private premises was continued during the year, in most cases using the anticoagulent "Warfarin." No major infestations were discovered.

Maintenance treatment for the destruction of rats in sewers was done during March and September, using alternately the poisons Zinc Phosphide and Arsenic. The small number of takes recorded showed that there was no serious re-infestation taking place in the sewers.

## Refuse Removal and Disposal

The removal of house refuse is carried out under the direction of the Sanitary Inspector. A Ford Thames refuse vehicle of 7 cubic yards capacity is operated with a team of six men.

Dustbins and pail closets are emptied weekly, privy middens as often as possible, generally about once every six weeks.

Disposal of refuse is by semi-controlled tipping in a disused stone quarry on the south eastern boundary of the district.

## Salvage

No special appeals have been made for saving waste paper, but this material was collected when available. During the year the demand became stronger and prices improved. Twelve tons were collected, which brought an income of £90.

## Shops

There are 110 shops on the register, which were visited twice during the year. They are mostly of the combined house and shop type, and few assistants are employed.

Duties under the Shops Act 1950, relating to the employment of young persons, washing facilities, etc., were performed on behalf of the Lancashire County Council.

## Schools

The four schools in the district were inspected, and the sanitary fittings examined. The abolition of trough closets at the one remaining school which still had this sanitary arrangement in use has been completed, and wash down water closets installed.

## Factories Act 1937, Sections 1-4 and 6-7

Routine visits were made to factories in the district and any defects found remedied without the service of statutory notices.

## **Summary of the Work of the Sanitary Inspector**







